

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A spinal stabilization system, comprising:
a stabilization device positionable along a spinal column, said stabilization device including at least one auxiliary element mounted thereto, said at least one auxiliary element including a cannulation extending at least partially therethrough between a proximal opening of said auxiliary element oriented away from the spinal column and a distal opening of said auxiliary element oriented toward the spinal column when said stabilization device is positioned along the spinal column; and
a holding element including a distal portion and a proximal portion, said distal portion positionable through said cannulation with said distal portion extending distally from said distal opening of said auxiliary element configured to enter into bone and engage the spinal column to maintain a positioning of said stabilization device along the spinal column and said proximal portion of said holding element releasably engages said auxiliary element in an interfitting relationship to prevent said auxiliary element from moving relative to said stabilization member, wherein when said holding element is engaged to said auxiliary element with said distal portion of said holding element extending distally from said auxiliary element and into bone of the spinal column, rotation of said proximal and distal portions of said holding element is operable to rotate-rotates said auxiliary element relative to said stabilization device with said distal portion of said holding element engaged to the spinal column.

2. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said stabilization device comprises an elongated plate including a number of bone anchor openings extending therethrough.

3. (Currently amended) The system of claim 2, wherein said auxiliary element includes a retaining device engaged to said plate at a location offset from said number of bone anchor openings and is positionable relative to said elongated plate to at least partially overlap at least one of said bone anchor openings.

4. (Currently amended) The system of claim 3, wherein said retaining device includes a fastener with a proximal head and a threaded stem extending distally from said proximal head, said threaded stem threadingly engages plate and said cannulation extends along a central axis of said fastener and with said distal opening at a distal end of said stem and said proximal opening at a proximal end of said head.

5. (Original) The system of claim 4, wherein said retaining device includes a retaining member including a central aperture for receiving said fastener.

6. (Original) The system of claim 4, wherein said elongated plate includes an aperture extending therethrough and said fastener is engageable with said aperture.

7. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein:
said cannulation extends completely through said auxiliary element; and
said distal portion of said holding element extends through said auxiliary element and is engageable with a structure of the spinal column when said stabilization device is positioned along the spinal column.

8. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said auxiliary element is movable relative to said stabilization device.

9. (Original) The system of claim 8, wherein said holding element engages said auxiliary element and is movable to manipulate said auxiliary device to a desired position relative to said stabilization device.

10. (Currently amended) The system of claim 1, wherein said holding element includes an ~~intermediate portion between said distal and proximal portions, said intermediate portion including a~~ distally oriented engagement surface for engaging said auxiliary element, said distally oriented engagement surface projecting outwardly around said distal portion of said holding element and

including at least one projection for receipt in a recess in said auxiliary element in said interfitting relationship.

11. (Currently amended) The system of claim 10, wherein said ~~proximal portion of said~~ holding element includes an intermediate portion between said distal portion and said proximal portion, said proximal portion including a shaft and a first driving tool engaging portion proximally adjacent said intermediate portion that projects outwardly from said shaft, said intermediate portion further including a tapered body portion sloping from said distally oriented engagement surface to said first driving tool engaging portion, intermediate portion and a second driving tool engaging portion spaced from said first driving tool engaging portion and adjacent a proximal end of said proximal portion.

12. (Currently amended) The system of claim 11, wherein said proximal portion of said holding element includes a second driving tool engaging portion adjacent a proximal end of said shaft of said proximal portion that includes a recess in an outer surface of said shaft comprising said proximal portion.

13. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said distal portion of said holding element includes a shaft and a penetrating element at a distal end of said shaft.

14. (Original) The system of claim 13, wherein said shaft is unthreaded.

15. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising a device positionable between vertebrae of a spinal column and wherein said stabilization device is positionable along the vertebrae.

16. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein:
said cannulation extends completely through said auxiliary element; and

said distal portion of said holding element extends through said auxiliary element and is engageable with said device when said stabilization device is positioned along the spinal column.

17. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein said device is a corpectomy implant and said stabilization device is an elongated plate.

18. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising an instrument engageable to said proximal portion of said holding element.

19. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein said proximal portion of said holding element includes a first instrument engaging portion adapted to deliver a rotational force from said instrument to said holding element and a second instrument engaging portion to simultaneously axially secure said instrument to said holding element.

20. (Currently amended) A spinal stabilization system, comprising:

a stabilization device positionable along a spinal column and including an auxiliary element associated therewith and movable relative thereto, said auxiliary element including a cannulation extending at least partially therethrough and a proximal engagement surface; and

a holding element including a distal portion positionable in said cannulation of said auxiliary element and configured to enter into bone of the spinal column, a proximal portion extending proximally from said distal portion, and an intermediate portion therebetween, wherein said intermediate portion includes a distally oriented engagement surface projecting outwardly from said distal portion that is adapted to interfit with said proximal engagement surface when said distal portion is positioned through said cannulation and into bone of the spinal column engage said auxiliary element to prevent said auxiliary element from moving relative to said stabilization device, said distal and intermediate portions of said holding element being movable when said distally oriented engagement surface is interfitted with said proximal engagement surface and said distal portion is entered into bone of the spinal column to move to position said auxiliary element in a desired position relative to said stabilization device.

21. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein said stabilization device comprises an elongated plate including a number of bone anchor openings extending therethrough.

22. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein said auxiliary element includes a retaining device positionable relative to said elongated plate to at least partially overlap at least one of said bone anchor openings.

23. (Currently amended) The system of claim 20, wherein said proximal portion of said holding element includes a first driving tool engaging portion proximally of and adjacent to said intermediate portion and a shaft extending proximally from said first driving tool engaging portion, said first driving tool engaging portion extending outwardly from said shaft, said intermediate portion further including a tapered body sloping from said distally oriented engagement surface to said first driving tool engaging portion, said proximal portion further including a second driving tool engaging portion on said shaft spaced from said first driving tool engaging portion and adjacent to a proximal end of said proximal portion.

24. (Currently amended) The system of claim 23, wherein said second driving tool engaging portion includes a recess in an outer surface of said shaft, a shaft comprising said proximal portion.

25. (Currently amended) The system of claim 23, claim 20, wherein said cannulation extends completely through said auxiliary element and said distal portion of said holding element includes a shaft extendable through said cannulation and a penetrating element at a distal end of said shaft for engagement with the spinal column.

26. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein said proximal portion of said holding element includes a first instrument engaging portion adapted to deliver a rotational force from an instrument to said holding element and a second instrument engaging portion adapted to axially secure the instrument to said holding element.

27. (Currently amended) A device for temporarily securing a spinal stabilization system to a spinal column, comprising:

a holding element including a distal portion with a sharp distal tip positionable in a cannulation of the stabilization system, a proximal portion extending proximally from said distal portion, and an intermediate portion therebetween that projects outwardly from said proximal portion and said distal portion, said intermediate portion including at least one projection extending distally therefrom and outwardly from said distal portion adapted to engage an auxiliary element of the stabilization system and deliver a rotational force thereto, wherein said proximal portion of said holding element includes a shaft and a first instrument engaging portion projecting outwardly from said shaft that is adapted to receive a rotational force delivered to said holding element that rotates said proximal portion and said distal portion in said cannulation and a second instrument engaging portion spaced from said first instrument engaging portion adapted to receive an axial force delivered to said holding element.

28. (Currently amended) The device of claim 27, wherein said intermediate portion includes a distally oriented engagement surface projecting outwardly from said distal portion, said distally oriented engagement surface including said at least one projection extending distally therefrom, adapted to engage an auxiliary element of the stabilization system and deliver a manipulation force thereto.

29. (Currently amended) The device of claim 28, claim 27, wherein said distal portion of said holding element includes a second shaft and said sharp distal tip is located a penetrating element at a distal end of said second shaft.

30. (Currently amended) The device of claim 29, claim 27, wherein said proximal portion includes a shaft and said first instrument engaging portion is positioned adjacent said intermediate portion includes a frusto-conical body that tapers from said distally oriented engagement surface to

~~said first instrument engaging portion at a distal end of said shaft and said second instrument engaging portion is positioned adjacent a proximal end of said shaft.~~

31. (Currently amended) The device of claim 30, wherein said first instrument engaging portion includes a head proximally of and adjacent to said intermediate portion that is shaped to receive a tool thereover and said second instrument engaging portion ~~includes a recess~~ is a recess adjacent to a proximal end of said shaft of said proximal portion about said shaft.

Claims 32-69 (Cancelled)

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